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MISCELLANY.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH MORTALITY.

The following paragraphs are taken from an article published in *London Times* (weekly edition), Sept. 26, 1890.

"In the first place, if sanitary conditions were equal, France ought to have a considerably lower death-rate than England, since its birth-rate is about only 23 per 1,000 of population against our own 31, and consequently there are less children of an age when the mortality is greatest. But, on the contrary, the death-rate for France during the five years 1884–88 was 22.3 per thousand, while that for England was under 19. The difference between these figures is really tremendous, for it means, in effect, that in a given population there are seven deaths in France for six in England. And if we proceed to analyse the cause of the higher mortality, it is pretty plain that it is due to imperfect sanitation. Unluckily, the French registration system is very defective, and there are no means of ascertaining with accuracy the number of deaths occurring throughout the country from particular diseases. As regards fever, for instance, the mortality cannot be precisely stated; but an official report addressed to the Comité d'Hygiène a couple of years ago estimated that it caused about 21,350 deaths annually, or about 600 per million of population. In England and Wales the yearly deaths from it are about 5,000, or 170 per million. Roughly calculated, therefore, there is about three times as much fever in France as in England. But although no detailed statistics as to the whole country are obtainable, the Bureau de l'Hygiène has of late years published a classified return of mortality in such towns of France as have a population over 10,000, and this return tells a tale. It will be convenient, in the first place, to compare the figures for Paris with those relating to London. These two are, according to Professor Marshall's "Economics," the two largest manufacturing towns in the world, and their inhabitants have many conditions in common. In the five years ending with 1889 the general death-rate of Paris was 23.5. That of London was 19.0. This difference is startling, but an analysis of the causes of death brings out still more striking results. It may be said without hesitation that the two diseases which are most directly influenced by sanitary conditions are enteric (typhoid) fever and diarrhœa. It is only where water is polluted, where sewerage is defective, or where earth and air are fouled by accumulations of filth, that these diseases flourish. In the same five years the average annual number of deaths from enteric fever in Paris was 1,072. In London, with almost exactly twice the population, the number was 612. In other words, in a given population there was between three and four times as much fever in Paris as in London. As regards diarrhœal diseases, the deaths in Paris averaged 4,126, those in London, 3,167, the Paris mortality from this cause being proportionately nearly three times that of London. The reasons are not far to seek. In London, though there are plenty of shortcomings in the sanitary administration of particular districts, we have the advantage of possessing an efficient system of sewerage and water, which if it does not attain a standard of ideal purity, nevertheless passes the most exacting tests which analysis can apply. In Paris, not only are a good many of the sewers badly made and insufficiently ventilated, but (unless alteration has been recently made) some thousands of houses still drain into cesspools (*puisards*), and filth thus accumulates for months in the midst of a crowded population.

"But if the sanitary condition of the capital leaves much to be desired, that of many of the provincial towns is far worse; and in some of them the number of deaths from preventable diseases is really appalling. It is worth while to examine the last statistical return published, which is that for 1888, bearing in mind, by the way, that the year in question had, with one exception, the lowest mortality of the last quarter of a century. It may be noted for comparison that the general death-rate in 1888 of the 28 largest towns in England was 19.2, the highest being Manchester (26.1). In the 29 largest provincial towns of France the average general death-rate was 25.4. Marseilles had a general death-rate of nearly 29, Havre of 35½, Rouen of 33½, Montpellier of 33, Brest of 32, Dieppe of 32, Reims of 31, and so on. Among the smaller towns there are higher figures still. Ivry, for instance, near Paris, had a death-rate of 43; Lambézellec, a town of some 16,000 inhabitants not far from Brest, had the same damnatory figure; so had its neighbor Morlaix; while Douarnenez, with a population of 11,000, also in the Finistère, actually reckons a mortality of 53 per 1,000. In English towns, among each

10,000 of the population, two persons died in 1888 of fever, and six of diarrhœa. The corresponding rates in the 29 largest provincial towns of France averaged 6 and 23 respectively, or three times as much fever and nearly four times as much diarrhœa as in England. In Marseilles they were 10 and 30 respectively, in Havre 26 and 30, in Lorient 28 and 4, in Rouen 8 and 74, in Cherbourg 24 and 19, and in Brest 11 and 20.

MULHALL ON STATISTICAL COMPUTATIONS.

In an article on *The Study of Statistics*, published in the *Contemporary Review*, October, 1890, Mr. Michael G. Mulhall finally throws light upon some of his statistical methods which have long puzzled students endeavoring to authenticate his conclusions. He devotes one section to what he terms Speculative Statistics in the following manner: —

"These come under Jevons' definition, 'occupying the debatable ground between ascertained fact and reasonable conjecture.' According to the official school they are not statistics at all, but guesses, more or less accurate, and of no scientific value whatever.

"Nevertheless, they constitute a very high order of statistics, and are by no means of that vague and uncertain character which opponents insinuate. Let us give a few illustrations. Some one inquires: 'What are the numbers of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, etc., in England?' The official statist replies: 'It is not known, because the census takes no cognizance of creeds.' But I answer: 'We know perfectly well, for the Registrar-General's returns shows that 72 per cent of the marriages are performed in the Church of England, 4 per cent in Catholic Churches, and 24 per cent among Dissenters.' Somebody else asks: 'What is the consumption of eggs in the United Kingdom?' The official statist replies: 'We can tell you the number imported, but not the home production.' And I answer: 'We have 20 million hens, which lay usually 90 eggs each per annum, from which, deducting 10 for hatching, we have 1600 millions home product, and 1100 millions imported last year: in all, about 2700 millions, or 73 per inhabitant.' A third person asks: 'What is the consumption of meat in the United Kingdom yearly?' The official statist replies: 'Unscrupulous persons may make a guess, but we